

Shubael Blanding House  
23 Cooke Street  
Providence  
Providence County  
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-211

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,  
111-

PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction  
143 South Third Street  
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. RI-211

## SHUBAEL BLANDING HOUSE

HABS  
RI,  
4-PROV,

Address: 20 Cooke Street, Providence, Providence County,  
Rhode Island. 111-  
Plat 13, lot 149.

Present Owner  
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Howard A. Merriman

Present Use: Dwelling

Brief Statement  
of Significance: This is a typical example of a small frame house  
built 1823-1826.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History

## 1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1820 Daniel C Cushing, manufacturer, sells for \$325 to James Bishop and Shubael Blanding, traders, as tenants in common, 3 several lots of land near the residence of James Fenner, being #7, 8, 9 on Plat of 1811 by Daniel Anthony, bound: N by street leading to James Fenner's house; E by lots #10 and #11; S by lot #6; W by Cooke Street. - Deed Book 44, page 218, in Providence City Hall
- 1823 James Bishop, gentleman, sells for \$190 to Shubael Blanding, trader, 1/2 part of 3 several lots sold to them by Daniel C Cushing in 1820. Bounded same as Deed Book 44, page 218...Cooke Street divides land of Sarah Olney and Daniel C Cushing...Each lot is 50' front and 100' deep. - Deed Book 47, page 143, in Providence City Hall.
- 1826 Fire Record:...Shubael Blanding on House on E side of Cooke Street...Wood...32' square...2 stories high front and rear...hipped roof...lower floor laid in mortar...occupied as DWELLING HOUSE. - Mss. fire insurance records of the Providence Mutual Insurance Co. at the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, Rhode Island Vol. 4, policy #3288.
- 1829 Shubael Blanding, merchant, sells for \$832.12-1/2 to Silvanus G Martin, merchant, a certain lot of land in that part of Providence called Cook's Little Orchard, with a new DWELLING HOUSE thereon

and other buildings, bounded: W by Cooke Street 50'; E by Silvanus Martin; E by James Fenner and Jenks lots; S by James Fenner 100'. - Deed Book 56, page 147, in Providence City Hall.

- 1843 Silvanus G Martin Sells for \$1935 to Elizabeth W Bowers, widow of Wm R Bowers, a certain lot of land, it being the same conveyed to grantor by Shubael Blanding in 1829 and is lot #7 on Plat formerly belonging to Daniel C Cushing, with the buildings standing thereon. - Deed Book 86, page 222, in Providence City Hall.
- 1869 Elizabeth W Bowers makes Nathan B Hall her trustee "of my estate on Cooke Street where I now reside" . - Deed Book 184, page 420, in Providence City Hall.
- 1881 Emily O Hall as trustee u/w of Nathan B Hall conveys to Samuel W Bowers and William W D F Bowers, that lot of land with Dwelling House on the E side of Cooke Street, bound: N by B J Adams; E by Adams and Sturgis Carpenter; S by Carpenter; W by Cooke Street. - Deed Book 308, page 524, in Providence City Hall.
- 1881 Samuel Wheaton Bowers sells for \$6500 to James C Greenough a certain lot of land with Dwelling House being same which was owned by the late Elizabeth W Bowers, dec., and is the same descended in deed from Emily O Hall trustee to said Samuel and William in 1881. - Deed Book 309, page 525 in Providence City Hall.
- 1900 Property was taxed to Harriet E Stockwell wf Thomas B...changed ownership several times and was taxed to Howard R Merriman & wf Ann in 1946.

2. Date of erection: between 1823 and 1826.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Elvira Gowdey  
for the Providence Preservation Society  
April 1962

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a small frame house built between 1823 and 1826. Typical features include the rusticated wood quoins and the balustraded monitor roof.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: 32' square main block facing west, four-bay front; somewhat later rear wing, 15' deep x 18' wide; two stories high.
2. Foundations: Main block: brick on west front, random stone on sides. Rear wing; brick
3. Wall construction: Frame; clapboards average 4" exposure; rusticated wood quoins, 11-1/2" x 8" and 16" x 8".
4. Porches: One-story front porch, round columns with Doric capitals, deeply projecting cornice similar to main roof. Later two-story rear porch.
5. Chimneys: Two chimneys in main block, one in north wall, inside toward the rear, one removed from south wall. One in rear wing.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doors and doorways: Later four-panel main door, perhaps 1840's, side lights, pilaster trim on doorway.
  - b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, molded frames, louvered shutters.
7. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Hip roof with monitor, shingled.
  - b. Cornice: Deeply projecting, molded cornice, drilled ovolo bed mold.
  - c. Dormers, cupolas: Low hip roofed monitor, low horizontal windows, latticework balustrade.

C. Technical Description of Interior

1. Floor plans: Entrance - stair hall, small parlor to southwest; large parlor on north side, originally two rooms; dining room on southeast. Present dining room probably original kitchen. Back hallway at northeast corner of main block, enclosed back stairs, north side entrance. Present kitchen in later rear wing. Door to rear wing has top light, and may have originally been an exterior door to the back yard. Bedrooms on second floor in similar arrangement. Storeroom in attic lighted by monitor. First floor ceiling height - 8'-6"; entrance hall, 6'-10" wide.
2. Stairways: Main stair in front entrance hall. Straight run with landing and turn at top, open string, open well, simple outside stringer, two slender rectangular balusters per step, turned newels; molded, ramped rail.
3. Flooring: Wide board floors. Lower floor laid in mortar for fireproofing according to 1826 fire insurance record.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster.
5. Doors and doorways: Six-panel wood doors, flat panels; small scale, complex moldings around panels. Molded architraves, except in large parlor and hall with pilaster trim, deeply cut, with corner blocks.
6. Trim: Window trim matches doorways.
7. Hardware: Butt hinges, mortised locks with small brass knobs.
8. Lighting: Electric.
9. Heating: Modern central heating. Fireplaces remain in large parlor and dining room and corresponding rooms on second floor. Fireplaces removed but locations apparent, in southwest rooms. Simple one-story wood mantels. Cooking fireplace in dining room which may have been original kitchen. Living room fireplace opening: 21-1/2" wide, 29-1/4" high, 16" deep, may have been built to receive a stove.

D. Site

1. General setting: Small lot in residential street, set back about 10' from sidewalk. Narrow side yards, small rear yard.
2. Enclosures: Wood fences or hedges

3. Walks: Asphalt
4. Landscaping: Informal garden in rear.

Prepared by Osmund R. Overby, Architect  
National Park Service  
April 1962